

A Comparative Study in Between the Management of a Professional Football Team and the Customs Administration of Cameroon

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Abstract

The Purpose of this paper is to explain why football management principles can make a difference to the way in which the Cameroon Customs Administration is managed, works and personnel management is carried out in the workplace. It has been ascertained by scholars, football professionals and technicians that business can learn from football management. Findings bring out the importance of the lessons of managers of successful and richest football clubs in the management of businesses and by extension to the Administration. It is assumed from the studies carried in the perspective that if the Principles applied in football management, taking the example of Sir Alex Ferguson with Manchester United is applied, The Cameroon Customs Revenue will pass from \$827.9 million a year to \$ 4232, 7 million which represents almost half of the Cameroon State budget. The Practical implications of the paper are that it provides hr specialists and practitioners managing the Cameroon Customs department with tools and principles to enhance significantly organizational performance. The originality of this research is that it tends to demonstrate that the Cameroon Customs department can copy from the principles applied in the management of sports in general and football in particular. However the said principles should be applied with regards to the general objective which is public interest and the multi-purpose nature and transparency limitations of the administration missions which differs in that sense from that of football clubs.

Key words: Football management; the Customs administration; human resource management; organizational performance.

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1. Introduction

There are a lot of parallels in between Football management and Cameroon Customs administration. Football managers need to manage high achievers as a team, but also encourage them to take individual responsibility. Similarly, in the Cameroon Customs administration we have highly competitive individuals who are supposed to work as a team in order to attain the general objectives of the organization and the ultimate goal of the general interest. It has always been the preoccupation of the state to create structures which are productive and optimally functional. The case of football teams like Real of Madrid; FC Barcelona just to name but a few is demonstrating that management is a science which rejects approximations. Wherefrom the need to compare in between professional sporting organizations which are known to be high performers ,successful and the Customs administration which really need to enhance its performance especially at the level of human resource management (HRM).In that vein, Paris-based Gérard Houllier, the technical director of the French Football Federation, the governing body of football in France, and who was manager of the Liverpool Football Club from 1998 to 2004, agrees that business can learn from football. He regularly gives motivational talks to corporate teams on how man-management is the key to a successful organization. *“In the world of football we talk about strategy, finance, business partners and the competition as well as management. So there are similarities. But then again there are big differences,” he says. “For example, in a corporate team if someone is off sick someone else can generally take on their role easily. And if someone has a difficult attitude you can simply get rid of them because in business you are dealing with individuals who are not as well known in the media. In football, it is not so simple. We need to nurture our stars and keep them on board,” he adds.* We strongly believe that a lot must be learnt from football management. In fact we speak a common language even though for different purposes. This paper aims at describing the conceptions of football management and Cameroon Customs Administration in their various dimensions; determining the existing link in between the various concepts before contextualizing with regards to the sociological realities of the research ground. This will enable us to bring out the relevance or not of football management practices for the betterment of Hr management in our organization as well as recommendations to enhance corporate performance.

2. The Conceptual Frameworks

2.1. Professional Football team principles

“Football managers are expected to take on a vast range of roles, from recruitment and human resources through training to finance.” States author in [17] lecturer in strategic management at Loughborough University in the U.K., has conducted an exhaustive study of management in the Barclays Premier League and other football leagues. At first sight the following values attract our attention for their pertinence:

- The vision for winning is the same in Football;
- Fan activism may hold lessons for directors and shareholders ;
- Managers must offer players skill, passion and loyalty to forge a winning formula ;
- Establishing a tradition of loyalty is a big boost for a corporate brand ;
- Teams try to find their winning formulas through mergers, acquisitions, and outsourcing ;

- Player risks are a very big part of the game and you must learn how to manage them ;
- Profit is not the only motivation for owning a club; there are many ancillary benefits too ;
- The tricky task of balancing the influence of individuals with a winning team effort ;
- Talented players are often fragile and managers must nurture them.
- Tracking of player details, matches history and performance;
- Helps in designing strategy for the competition;
- Powerful centralized database of players, competition, camps, competition performance, match performance and player performance;
- Various MIS reports for decision making;
- Reminders and alerts ;
- Document Management System for various player personal documents like passport, civil ID, medical records and other documents;
- Mobile app (Android & iOS) with selected functionality and features.

2.2. The Cameroon Customs Administration

The customs administration is defined in its structuring and functioning by Decree N° 2013/066 of 28/02/2013 signed by the Head of State of Cameroon, organizing the Ministry of Finance in the Republic of Cameroon. The missions of the Customs administration are the followings:

- Tax mission: the Customs administration collects taxes and customs duties which are paid into the public treasury. Customs thus contributes to more than 30% in the realization of Cameroon's State budget;
- Economic mission: consists in the protection of the national economic space and the encouragement of the country's economic development. This involves the fight against fraud, smuggling, trade facilitation, management of customs economic regimes, the fight against compensatory measures and dumping, the control of competition rules;
- Assistance mission: Due to its presence at the borders, Customs is required to carry out missions on behalf of other administrations. It thus provides its assistance to various State services, notably: the Ministry of Defense in controlling the entry of weapons, munitions and harmful substances, and the Ministry of Public Health through the control of Drugs and the quality of food...
- Surveillance Mission: the surveillance of land, air, and maritime entry and exit points on the customs territory is provided by the Director General of Customs. This surveillance helps to fight against illegal trafficking (drugs, money laundering) and organized crime.

The organization of the Customs administration is structured as follows:

The Directorate General of Customs is comprised of the following services:

A Department of Resources and Logistics;

A Division of International Cooperation and Tax Bases;

A Division of Legislation and Litigation;

A Division of Customs Investigations and Surveillance;

A Division of Recovery, Statistics and Information System;

A Division for the Control of Financial Operations of External Trade and Exchange;

An information and communication Unit; Division of Studies, Security and Trade facilitation; A Customs Training Centre; A Special Customs Intervention Squad.

The Personnel of the Customs is organized as follows:

Customs staff consists of civil servants and non civil servants. The civil servants include:

- The sedentary personnel, working in principal offices in charge of the determination of the basis of calculation and collection of customs duties and taxes. It is the civilian personnel;
- The active personnel, working in the surveillance units (subdivisions, Brigades, Posts). These personnel fulfills the mission of surveillance of land, sea and air frontiers, the conducting and putting of goods at customs disposal. They wear the uniform of the customs. We find these personnel at central services as well;
- The other civil servants (of the Treasury, Statistics, Water and Forestry, Documentation ...), who perform various functions within the Customs Administration;
- The non-civil servant staff is composed of contract officers of the administration and State agents, all governed by the Labor Code.

The organization of the human resource management in the customs administration is somehow illustrative of the philosophy of HRM practices in the public sector. In that regard the directorate of resource and logistics of the Customs department, under the supervision of a director is in charge of:

- The administration and planning of personnel;
- The training and development of personnel;
- The implementation of social policy;
- The management of lodging “cites des douanes” and follow up of associations;

- The organization of social and cultural activities, sports and music;
- Defining and executing the budget;
- Elaborating the investments plan of the Customs administration;
- Acquiring weapons in collaboration with the army;
- Accounting and sharing of compensations and benefits;
- Follow up of dressing up and feeding of personnel;
- Maintaining the transmission network and the waterways transportation tools;
- The organization of the participation of the customs administration during March past.

The said directorate is made up of the following units:

1. The unit in charge of human resource and social action;
2. The unit in charge of budgeting and logistics;
3. The unit in charge of networking and communications systems.

2.3. The Human resource management concept

The concept of Human Resource (HR) was introduced by author in [8] .The concept was introduced in most African countries in the 1990's with an objective of facilitating growth of employees, especially people at the lower levels. Among the public sector it was later developed.

Table 8

| <i>HRM Objectives</i> | <i>Supporting Functions</i> |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Societal Objectives | 1. Legal compliance 2. Benefits 3. Union-management relations |
| 2. Organisational Objectives | 1. Human resource planning 2. Employee relations 3. Selection 4. Training and development 5. Appraisal 6. Placement 7. Assessment |
| 3. Functional Objectives | 1. Appraisal 2. Placement 3. Assessment |
| 4. Personal Objectives | 1. Training and development 2. Appraisal 3. Placement 4. Compensation 5. Assessment |

Source: Smriti Chand

2.4. Organizational performance

Organizational performance encompasses areas such as Firm outcomes according to author in [10] , customer service, social responsibility, employee stewardship, organizational performance (author in [13]), Performance measurement systems (author in [13]), Performance improvement, organizational engineering and performance measuring.

The Causal Model of Organizational Performance and Change below, also known as the Burke & Litwin Model, suggests linkages that hypothesize how performance is affected by internal and external factors. It provides a framework to assess organizational and environmental dimensions that are keys to successful change and it demonstrates how these dimensions should be linked causally to achieve a change in performance.

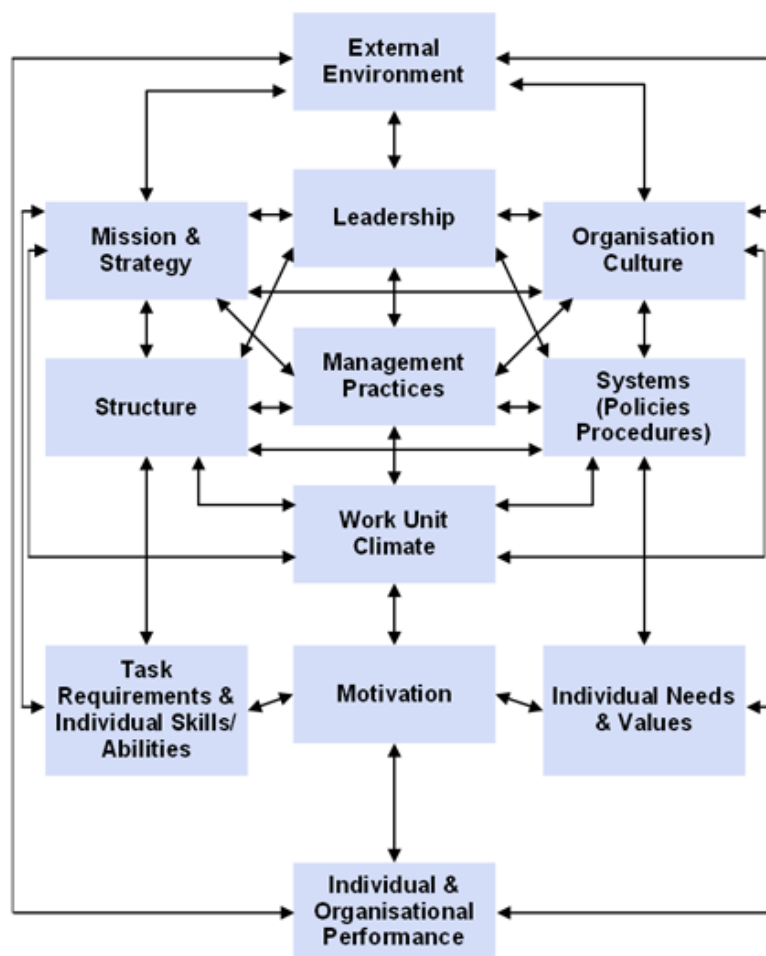


Figure 1

Source: Move

3. The Theoretical frameworks

Our theoretical frameworks will be based on three major theories and authors of well-Known and successful

football managers such as: (author in [11]), and (author in [3]).

Author in [11], is one of the most successful and longest serving managers in Football. He managed Manchester United for over a quarter of a century, during which period he won 38 trophies. The below chart shows just how incredible his reign was:

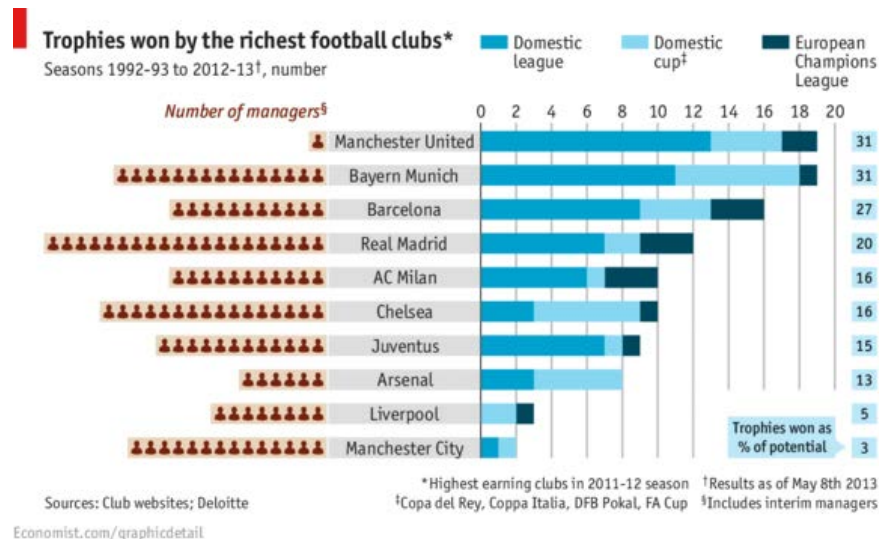


Figure 2

According to Tanay Jaipuria in the journal entitled Medium, we can learn the following lessons from Sir Alex Ferguson's management:

1. Treat everyone in your organization with respect and make them feel valued;
2. Young employees learn best when working with more experienced employees, so ensure they have the ability to do that;
3. The most important job of a manager is to motivate the employees they manage;
4. Have one on ones with the employees you manage. These meetings are for them, not you;
5. It is vital to have a well functioning team, and no one person, however talented, who jeopardizes that is worth it;
6. To grow your organization, you should invest some of the profits you generate back into the business and you need to be willing to make risky decisions;
7. Spend most of your time focusing on your own company/product, and the remaining little bit of time on your most fierce competitors;
8. Resources are scarce. Plan ahead and learn to make trade-offs;
9. Delegate;
10. Focus on the long term;
11. Be flexible and learn to adapt and embrace new technologies.

Gérard Houllier is a French football manager and former player. He is one of the greatest managers in football

world as testified by the records below:

Table 1: Gérard Houllier’s records as football manager

| | |
|-----------|----------------------------------|
| 1973–1976 | Le Touquet |
| 1976–1982 | Nœux-les-Mines |
| 1982–1985 | Lens |
| 1985–1988 | Paris Saint-Germain |
| 1988–1992 | France (assistant manager) |
| 1992–1993 | France |
| 1994–1996 | France U18 |
| 1996–1997 | France U20 |
| 1998 | Liverpool (joint with Roy Evans) |
| 1998–2004 | Liverpool |
| 2005–2007 | Lyon |
| 2010–2011 | Aston Villa |

Source: Wikipedia

According to author in [3], on the successful creation of a football team, He eschews the classic business maxim that achievement is 80% effort and 20% talent and points to a 95/5 ratio — 95% being effort and the 5% talent. “The players have to be talented to get there in the first place at the highest level. But then you need to define their roles for them, to get inside their heads to work out what makes them tick. That is the manager’s job. The captain is the relay between the players and the manager, getting the message across. Again, in business there are different dynamics.”

4. Hypotheses


From the above-mentioned, the following hypotheses can be drawn:

- Ho1: Football management principles can bring success in the running of Cameroon customs administration
- Ho2: Football management principles cannot be applied successfully in the customs administration
- Ho3: Football can learn from administration
- Ho4: Football cannot learn from administration

5. The Variables

Constant variable

dependent variable

Football management Administration  organizational performance of the Cameroon Customs

6. The research methodology

Research methods used for this study was a mixed method implying quantitative (Sample Size; Determination; Hypothesis Testing) and qualitative methods such as (Direct observation ;Open-ended surveys; Focus group; In-depth interviews; history; Content; Ethnographic observation and Participant observation).The researcher also verified the validity and reliability of the data collected and analyzed through the sampling validity and constructs validity and followed the under mentioned procedure to guarantee validity of the survey:

- He used broad sampling;
- He emphasized on important content;
- He wrote questions to measure the appropriate skills;
- He involved a panel of experts for his study.

For the range of the reliability coefficient that is from 0 to 1. Rule of thumb for preferred levels of the coefficient:

- For high stakes tests > 0.85 . Some authors suggest this figure should be above .90.
- For low stakes tests > 0.70 . Some authors suggest this figure should be above 0.80.

The coefficient being above 0.8 for both the dependent and independent variables that were subsequently defined and measured, the reliability permitted us to rely on the quality of the analyses.

7. Sampling and demographic information

Table 2: 10 biggest football teams in the World and outputs

| N° | Teams | Outputs in USD |
|----|-------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Manchester United | \$827.9 million |
| 2 | Real Madrid | \$ 825.9 million |
| 3 | FC Barcelona | \$793.2 million |
| 4 | Bayern Munich | \$719.8 million |
| 5 | Manchester City | \$646.2 million |
| 6 | Arsenal | \$597.1 million |
| 7 | PSG | \$595.4 million |
| 8 | Chelsea | \$524.3 million |
| 9 | Liverpool | \$519.5 million |
| 10 | Juventus | \$496.9 million |

Source: Statista Journal on Sports and recreation

Table 3: Manchester United's Number of employees from 2013 to 2017, by segment.

| Sectors/Number of personnel | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Administration and other | 391 | 469 | 440 | 426 | 445 |
| Commercial | 125 | 138 | 122 | 111 | 120 |
| Technical and coaching | 76 | 92 | 89 | 94 | 136 |
| Media | 69 | 91 | 89 | 94 | 90 |
| Players | 82 | 79 | 73 | 74 | 74 |
| TOTAL | 743 | 869 | 813 | 799 | 865 |

Source: Statista Journal on Sports and recreation

The researcher targeted the personnel of the Cameroon Customs Administration from 2010 to 2016. The figures of the said staff is tabulated below:

Table 4: The personnel of the Cameroon Customs Administration from 2010 to 2016.

| year | Total Category A | Total Category B | Total Category C | Total Category D | Total others | Total | Evolution in % |
|------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|-------|----------------|
| 2016 | 534 | 510 | 1036 | 1543 | 484 | 4107 | 66 |
| 2015 | 498 | 482 | 421 | 571 | 495 | 2467 | 14 |
| 2014 | 464 | 449 | 287 | 442 | 504 | 2146 | -0.14 |
| 2013 | 464 | 449 | 287 | 428 | 521 | 2149 | 04 |
| 2012 | 424 | 418 | 287 | 424 | 502 | 2055 | 10 |
| 2011 | 381 | 378 | 287 | 407 | 412 | 1865 | 03 |
| 2010 | 344 | 346 | 287 | 395 | 423 | 1795 | |

Source: Customs Administration

Table 5: A comparative study in between the customs administration and Manchester United

| N° | Bodies | Number of personnel in 2016 | Revenues produced in average | Ratio revenues/personnel |
|----|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Cameroon Customs | 4107 | \$1315, 7 million | \$ 0,32 |
| 2 | Manchester United | 799 | \$827.9 million | \$ 1,03 |

Source: The Author

8. Research findings

Single factor analysis (ANOVA)

$$s^2 = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2}{N}$$

Regression Model for organizational performance

Regression models involve the following parameters and variables:

- The unknown parameters, denoted as β , which may represent a scalar or a vector;
- The dependent variable, denoted as, X ;
- The independent variable, denoted as Y .

In various fields of application, different terminologies are used in place of dependent and independent variables. A regression model relates Y to a function of X and β .

Table 6: the overall regression model

| Model | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Regression | 0.820 | 6 | 0.137 | 15.22 | 0.01 |
| Residual | 0.112 | 113 | 0.09 | | |
| Total | 0.932 | 119 | | | |

The study found that the overall regression model (Model 1 in table) is significant. This means that:

- The independent variable Football management principles significantly explains the extent of organizational performance and the quality of human resource practices considering the fact that the p-value is 0.01 which is less than 5%.

9. Limitations of the research

Although this research was carefully prepared, I am still aware of its limitations and shortcomings.

First of all, the research was conducted in the developing world context where access to information is still very limited;

Second, the population of the experimental group does not systematically represent the majority of opinions on the topic at hand;

Thirdly, the research in this area is scarce in Africa in general and in Cameroon in particular, the country of the researcher.

Finally since the assessment of the pretest and post test was conducted by the author himself, it is possible to find in this study, certain degree of subjectivity.

10. Discussion

Our research led us to the results according to which Football management principles can bring a lot in the practice of human resource in the Customs administration. We can observe from the table 5 above on a comparative study in between the customs administration and Manchester United that the former has a better ratio in terms of performance of 1, 03 against 0, 32 for the former. We therefore infer the fact that the model should be applied in our administration regarding the contextual realities.

In comparison to authors in [11,3], management principles earlier mentioned is relevant in our case as follows.

1. Treat everyone in your organization with respect and make them feel valued;
2. Young employees learn best when working with more experienced employees, so ensure they have the ability to do that;
3. The most important job of a manager is to motivate the employees they manage;
4. Have one on ones with the employees you manage. These meetings are for them, not you;
5. It is vital to have a well functioning team, and no one person, however talented, who jeopardizes that is worth it;
6. To grow your organization, you should invest some of the profits you generate back into the business and you need to be willing to make risky decisions;
7. Spend most of your time focusing on your own company/product, and the remaining little bit of time

- on your most fierce competitors;
8. Resources are scarce. Plan ahead and learn to make trade-offs;
 9. Delegate;
 10. Focus on the long term;
 11. Be flexible and learn to adapt and embrace new technologies.

However, there is a clear distinction between business; administration teams and sports teams. Administration has multiple objectives and the general interest of the citizens as utmost goal while in sports such as football the individuals generally have a quite singular objective in terms of performance. According to author in [9], There is a transparency in football which is not always so clear in business. In both cases, however, the goal is clear: performance, whether it is winning the match or the competitive corporate pitch. “Ideals are easily taken from the sports field to the business environment,” says the author in [2] , professor of psychology at University College London. “Motivational speakers often come from the world of sport, but they need to translate their experience to what applies in business.”

We can deduct from the above mentioned that administration can copy from the principles applied in the management of sports in general and football in particular. However the said principles should be applied with regards to the general objective which is public interest and the multi-purpose nature of the administration job which differs in that sense from football clubs.

We therefore make the hypothesis according to which implementing the management tools and rules applied in football management will lead to the success and will double the performance and revenues produced by the customs administration as illustrated below:

Table 7: A comparative study projecting the customs administration in the image of Manchester United

| N° | Bodies | Number of personnel in 2016 | Revenues produced in average | Ratio revenues/personnel |
|----|--|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | Cameroon Customs | 4107 | \$1315, 7 million | \$ 0,32 |
| 2 | Manchester United | 799 | \$827.9 million | \$ 1,03 |
| 3 | Cameroon Customs applying the principles of Manchester united management | Remain the same but specialized considering the general interest factor | Will become equal in terms of ratio therefore: $\frac{1.03 \times 1315}{0.32} = 4232,7$ | \$ 1,03 |

We therefore assume that if the Principles applied in football management, taking the example of Sir Alex Ferguson with Manchester United is applied, The Cameroon Customs Revenue will pass from \$827.9 million a year to \$ 4232,7 million which represents almost half of the Cameroon State budget. The fact that notwithstanding Partnership agreement the results of \$827.9 million was achieved successfully last year by the Customs administration before end of year shows that our analysis is viable and reliable. For instance in 2017 the fact the Customs department produced almost 130% of revenues expected before time is a clear indicator in that regard.

11. Conclusions

The aim of this *study* was to explore the range and nature of football management principles and its benefits on a possible implementation in the Customs department of Cameroon for enhancement of organizational performance and hr practices betterment. A mixed approach i.e. qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted using a range of complementary methods. The study has provided insights on the football management principles; the realities and regulation of the Cameroon Customs administration; the impact of implementing such principles in the Said administration and how to do it.

The statistical inferences lead to the fact that The Cameroon Customs Revenue will pass from \$827.9 million a year to \$ 4232, 7 million which represents almost half of the Cameroon State budget if the Hr management principles applied by Sir Alex henceforth guide the Customs practices.

12. Recommendations

It is therefore recommended on the basis of the above-mentioned the followings:

- Specialization of Customs agents from the base i.e. from the training center like in football teams. This will imply that we should have Customs agent trained in sectors such as Communication; legal procedures in court; computer science; human resource; Logistics and transport; investigations and surveillance; statistics and information system; financial transactions; education etc. This will enable the administration to be professional and more efficient. This is already applied with success in other corporate bodies such as police and army just to name but a few. The fact that customs agents have a general, broad training leads most often to inefficiency; bureaucracy; idleness and corruption;
- Remuneration of agents according to performance not only status like in football where the most expensive players are paid according to their past and present performance and of the expected results from them. There is therefore the need to redefine compensation and benefits for it to be solely based on objective and performance criteria and as a tool of reward or sanction;
- Putting in place of a career plan , effective job description and a clear specification of the requirements to occupy certain position, this will avoid subjectivity and corruption in appointing people where they do not often merit. Thereby applying the sacrosanct principle :“ The right man at the right place”;
- Like a football coach the role of the manager must be to motivate, follow up and assess his collaborators, the manager should also be assessed in that regard not only on political or subjective

consideration. We think a degree in management could be required from him since management is a science on its own;

- A clear distinction should be made in between political positions and administrative ones in the country;
- A communication system that explains the importance of the Customs mission should be broadcast on media (TV; internet; radio; social media) in order to promote the image of the Customs administration and sensitize citizens to adhere to that common goal of developing the country through tax revenues;
- There is a need for the manager to invest in logistics; well-being and comfort of his personnel (Sports; recreation; health care and education) to avoid social misery and temptation to misappropriate resources initially destined to the state coffers;
- The strategy of the Customs administration should not only be limited in the short term as it is now, but a strategical vision and plan should be clearly defined and put in place no matter the change of manager and in that regard it should be imposed by the government and followed up consequently;
- There is a need to reinforce international cooperation not only in the sense of training but more in a practical exchange of experience, also material and logistic assistance is necessary;
- The training plan should be communicated and implemented accordingly for without development there cannot be enhancement of performance;
- The customs administration absolutely need an information system up to date in all the sectors especially hr where it is inexistent for a better mobility and management of human resource;
- An emphasis should be on planning; coordination and in that regard performance contract should be given a real sense and implemented according to international standards;
- Performance management should be at all time the motto contrarily to subjective considerations which will only lead to underperformance and poverty;
- The manager should also be a leader who by his example will put in place an organizational culture and values necessary for a good social climate and motivation of personnel to look at the same direction.

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